whether it could be done with safety to the Union men and to the emancipated slaves. He therefore requested me to visit those States for the purpose of reporting to him whatever information I could gather as to the existing condition of things, and of suggesting to him such measures as my observations might lead me to believe advisable. He accompanied this request with many flattering assurances of his confidence in my character and judgment, and added the most urgent expression of his hope that I would not decline the task. He appeared to me like a man who had taken some important step under pressure, against his own inclination, and who was troubled about himself.

The President's request came as a great surprise to me. I could not at once understand why he should have selected just me for this delicate mission. I must also confess that the prospect of spending two or three months of the hottest season of the year in the Gulf States was by no means alluring. But I should not have minded that had not the whole affair struck me as somewhat strange. I asked the President to give me one or two days to consider the matter, and he kindly assented. I went to Mr. Stanton, then still Secretary of War, to learn whether the proposition made to me by the President had been suggested by him. He assured me that it had not. In fact, he was as much surprised as I was, but he advised me most urgently to accept at once. He told me that

President Johnson was set upon by all sorts of influences, and that what he needed most, was to learn the truth. I also consulted Chief Justice Chase, who told me that in his opinion I had an opportunity for rendering a valuable service to the country, and that I must not think of declining. What impressed me strongly was that neither of them made the slightest suggestion as to what they expected me to report. The next day I informed President